

DIALECT DRINKING

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Just about everyone enjoys a tipple from time to time, some more than others. The language associated with drinking and drinkers is the most colorful of all activities. Anybody who has marvelled at the record of 2231 ways to say "drunk" in the section "Soused Synonyms" in Paul Dickson's Words (Delacorte Press, 1982) appreciates the variety and humour that flows from the tosspot's tipsified tongue. After a session with the demon drink you could be bungfu, psatzed, discumfuddled, arfarfanark, zozzled, obfusticated, muckibus, corkscrewed, barrelhouse, liquefied, snoozamorooed, or just plain shickered!

Some of the most fascinating drinking expressions are attributable to British imbibers, and what follows is a list of my favourite terms from the English Dialect Dictionary, edited by Joseph Wright, first published in 1905. One specimen only has been included from each letter of the alphabet, with the sole non-dialect word being the example for X which appears in Paul Dickson's work. I'm sure you will agree that it is most appropriate.

ARVAL money given to hunters, at the death of a fox, to buy ale
BLABBERAN the act of making a gurgling noise with the lips while drinking

CAP-STRIDE to drink in place of another

DEW-CUP the first allowance of beer to harvest-men

EKE an additional half-glass of drink

FUDDLING the act of intoxicating fish, a poaching practice

GARNISH cash extorted from a new prisoner as drink-money for the other inmates

HOWFF a much-frequented tavern

ILLFIT a large brewing vessel used in Shropshire

JIGGER one who works an illicit still

KIDDLIWINK an unlicensed cider or beer shop

LANTING putting urine into ale to make it strong

MAHOGANY a drink consisting of gin and treacle

NEWCASTLE CLOAK a tub put over the head of a drunkard and worn like a garment

OKUM-SNIFFY a small but strong glass of hot grog

PINKLE-PANKLE the tinkling sound of liquid in a bottle

QUILL to ply parliamentary electors with drink

RAMSTAM the strongest home-brewed beer

SERVICE each round of whisky supplied to the company at a funeral

TOORALOORAL partially intoxicated (this arose from a test of drunkenness, namely the ability to say "truly rural", distorted

by the "merry person" to "tooralooral")
 UMBRELLAS an honour paid to a person by drinking his health
 and then inverting the glasses
 VALENTIA a tin instrument used for getting beer out from the
 bung-hole of a cask
 WASSAILING drinking to the success of an apple crop
 XENODOCHEIONOLOGY love of hotels and inns
 YORKSHIRE-MAN a fly drowned in ale
 ZAWKER a Devonshire tippler

THE CITY IN SLANG

It is a truism that popular speech responds to the changing circumstances of man's environment. One of the most profound changes in America during the past 150 years has been its shift from a rural to an urban (and, more recently, a sub-urban) society. In The City In Slang (Oxford University Press, 1993; \$25), sociologist Irving Lewis Allen examines the history of a wide variety of slang words and terms associated with New York City from 1850 to 1950. As Allen succinctly puts it, it is "a look at city life through the lenses of popular speech".

The book is arranged topically rather than alphabetically, with chapters devoted to matters like Us and Them (the names of different classes for each other), Tall Buildings, The Sporting Life (saloons, dance halls, bawdy houses, gambling dens), and New Ways of Urban Living (transportation, fast food, communications). Allen illuminates his commentary with quotations drawn from sociological treatises and the newspapers and books of that era, including fictional treatments of city life such as depicted in books like Dreiser's Sister Carrie or Crane's Maggie.

QUERY

David Woodside, 4894 S. Colony Drive, Salt Lake City UT 84117, is compiling a book on palindromes tentatively entitled Palindromania. It will be a broad treatment of the art of palindrome making, containing palindrome words, word-pairs, phrases and sentences, verses, and various illustrated palindromes. It will feature a comprehensive bibliography, and include the reproduced work of former and current bon motorists. Any information leading to the arrest and publication of palindrome material, new and old, including personal material, reference sources, and the names of those persons unfortunate enough to have spent many hours constructing backwards things, will go unrewarded.